

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2006

The Honorable Ralph Regula, Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services and Education  
2358 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David R. Obey, Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services and Education  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Regula and Ranking Member Obey:

As the subcommittee begins its work on the fiscal year 2007 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill, we urge your support for \$2.50 billion for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) program. We also thank you for your work over the years in support of afterschool programs and look forward to your continued efforts.

Four years ago, a bipartisan commitment to quality afterschool programs was included in the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act. Due to level funding of the program since fiscal year 2002, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC has served, at most, only 1.4 million children each year since the law was passed. If fully funded, over 3.4 million children would be served in afterschool programs funded by 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC. If we do not fully fund the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Program, it will mean that approximately 2 million children will be left without a safe, enriching environment to go to after the school bell rings. Clearly, we need to do better for children and working parents.

Afterschool programs help keep kids safe, reduce crime and drug use, and improve academic performance. The demand for affordable, quality afterschool experiences far exceeds the availability of these programs. The Afterschool Alliance, with support from the JCPenney Afterschool Fund, recently released findings from a national household survey that shows that more than 14 million K-12 youth spend time unsupervised in the hours after school, many while their parents are still at work. In contrast, only 6.5 million youth participate in any comprehensive afterschool program. Moreover, parents of more than 15 million youth say that their children would participate in an afterschool program if one were available in their community.

We appreciate the difficult budget situation you face, but we also note that federal funding for afterschool is supported by 9 out of 10 Americans who believe the nation's children need a safe, supervised learning environment to spend their after school hours. Funding 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC at \$2.50 billion, and providing programs for 3.2 million children, will bring us closer to reaching that goal.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

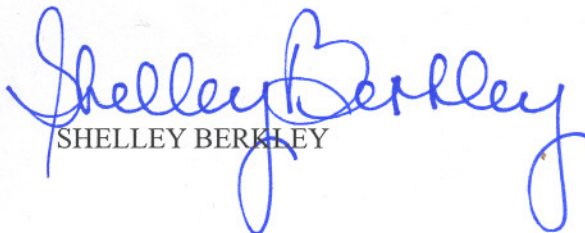
Sincerely,



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ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

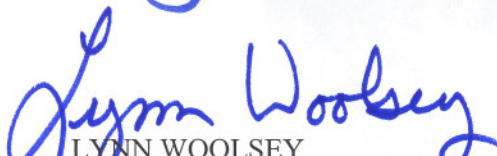


SHELLEY BERKLEY

  
DONALD PAYNE

  
HENRY WAXMAN

  
BETTY MCCOLLUM

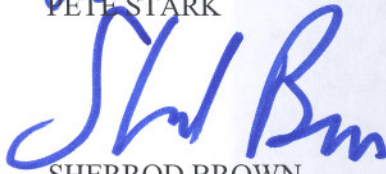
  
LYNN WOOLSEY

  
CAROLYN MCCARTHY

  
JIM MCDERMOTT

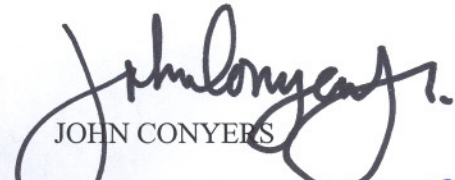
  
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PETE STARK

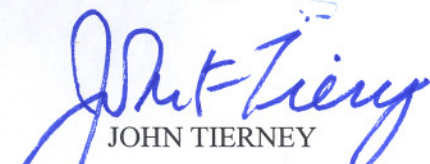
  
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MAJOR OWENS

  
JOHN CONYERS

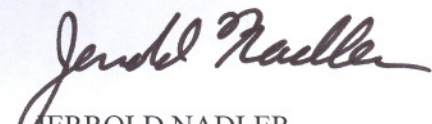
  
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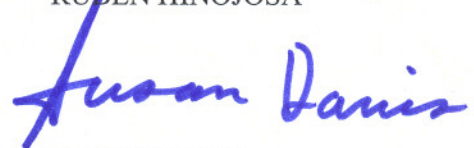
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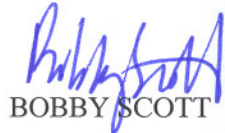
RUBEN HINOJOSA



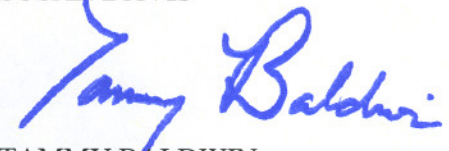
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SUSAN DAVIS



BOBBY SCOTT



TAMMY BALDWIN



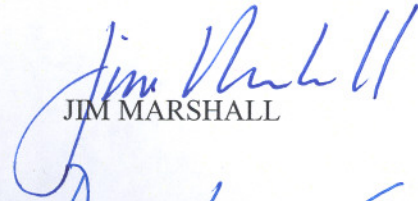
RUSH HOLT



MICHAEL MICHAUD



JIM DAVIS



JIM MARSHALL



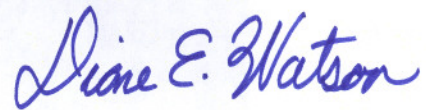
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DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ



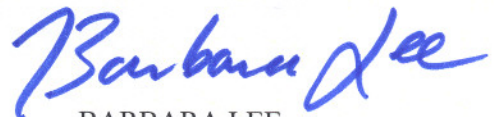
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